

**Boone County Watershed Committee
Don Williams Lake Watershed Improvement Project**

MEETING SUMMARY

January 27, 2010

6:30 pm

USDA Service Center, Boone

Attendees:

Kevin Griggs, Boone County Soil & Water Conservation District, Project Chair
Andy Hockenson, Boone County Conservation Board, Project Vice-Chair
John Paulin, Prairies Rivers of Iowa RC&D, Meeting Facilitator
Bill Lusher, Boone County Supervisor
Jayne Smith, Boone County Soil & Water Conservation District
Scott Smith, Boone County Landfill/KBCB, Project Secretary
Lois Powers, Boone County Landfill/KBCB
Lisa Anderson, Boone County Landfill/KBCB
Ron Scheuermann, Property Owner
Jim Turbes, KWBG Radio
Jeremy Johannsen, NRCS
Bill Lees, Property Owner
Al Lingren, Boone County Soil & Water Conservation District, Property Owner
Natalie Hedlund, ISU Boone County Extension

Meeting facilitator John Paulin started the meeting by having the attendees go around the table and introduce themselves.

As attendees introduced themselves, the following recurrent themes were mentioned. This project needs to be based on cooperation; the project needs to respect and support the needs of agriculture as well as recreation; the long-term viability of the watershed is important and needs to be protected.

Bill Lees stated that he wondered why this had not been tried before.

John stated his connection to the Don Williams Lake watershed is both personal and professional. He shared that on his first Father's Day in 2002 he and his son went fishing at Don Williams Lake.

Why This Watershed?

It was explained that this watershed was selected by the Committee because of its role as one of the jewels of Boone County. It is also listed as an impaired waterway due to sedimentation and

phosphorous levels. The water quality conditions in the watershed are getting worse and will continue to do so unless a plan is developed that charts a course towards improvements.

It is anticipated that what is learned from this project will be of benefit to other watersheds throughout Boone County. This particular project is using a different strategy - Community-Based Planning (CBP). CBP is a planning model that seeks to involve all players in a particular issue. By reaching out to all sectors, it is hoped that a better plan can be developed with a broader level of support.

Overview of Plan Development Activities:

John summarized what activities would be taking place over the next two years. Public meetings will be held on a quarterly basis to gain public input and involvement in the process. The first year will focus on inventory and assessment activities to gain a better understanding of the watershed. Education and awareness initiatives will be put into place that will provide the general public with information about watershed quality issues. An innovative part of this project will be the Mobile Watershed Education Center (MWEC) being developed by the Landfill/Keep Boone County Beautiful.

The second year will take the information gathered in the first year and center on developing an improvement plan that meets USEPA criteria. This plan will be collaborative in nature and will build on cooperative relationships with property owners. Providing a plan can be developed that meets USEPA criteria for approval, this will open up federal funding options.

Education will continue to play an ongoing part in the project during the second year and beyond.

Kevin stated that the “Big Picture” question is, “What can we do for water quality?” He stated that we can all make a real difference. As for why this watershed, he stated that he has seen a real energy building in Boone County pertaining to environmental improvement and education. He said that he felt that we can hit a home run with the Don Williams Lake watershed since it is loved by Boone Countians.

Bill Lusher added that he sees the project as an opportunity to realize a win/win situation for everyone. He added that the watershed quality can be improved while respecting the needs of agriculture and recreation.

Community-Based Planning:

Scott provided a summary about how the DNR is looking for a project that uses the CBP model. CBP has been used successfully in the past for other problems that society has faced. The problems associated with garbage that arose in the 1980s provided an ideal opportunity to use CBP. This strategy has worked well in Iowa (and elsewhere) to address solid waste management

problems, overcome them, and become proactive instead of reactive. CBP utilizes long-term goal setting with shorter-term objectives to achieve stated goals. This is the strategy selected for the Don Williams Lake Watershed Improvement Project.

Scott also described the MVEC project. It utilizes an old school bus to bring on-site watershed quality learning to any location. Learning opportunities will include both hands-on and technology-based activities. It will serve as one of many tools and resources to educate the general public and will play a key role in the CBP strategy.

General Discussion:

Andy shared that fishing is a key draw for bringing people to Don Williams Lake. In turn Boone County Conservation relies on Don Williams Lake. Put simply, if we can keep the fish, we keep the draw to use the park.

Bill Lusher stated that the Board wish that this be a successful project. With “wins across the board” this project can be used as a catalyst.

Scott added that the project can provide the tools and expertise to keep watersheds off the impaired list altogether.

Al asked , “How many acres are included in the watershed?” Approximately 22,000 acres make up the watershed in both Boone and Webster Counties. The Webster County Conservation Board is supportive of this project. The project officially started with tonight’s meeting.

John stated that the project hinges on involvement if it is to be successful. This includes involvement of property owners to understand their needs and concerns, the general public and participating agencies. Ongoing communication is key.

Scott stated that a new website is being developed by the County and will be online in late March. A page on this website has been dedicated to the project. This can serve as a home-base for sharing information about the project.

Bill Lusher reminded everyone that non-electronic communication will also be needed since some do not have access to the internet. He added that he hoped ongoing “one on one” communication with the land owners can be established and maintained.

Kevin thanked Jim Turbes and Scott Smith for getting the information out about the project and the meeting. He stated it is time to get the conversation started.

Vision Statement:

One of the stated activities of the project calls for development of a Vision Statement to serve as

a guide for the participants over the next two years. This will help keep the group focused and ensure the project stays on task.

John asked attendees to share words and phrases that came to mind with respect to the project. The following were offered:

generational	education
inclusive/participatory	opportunity
balanced	long-term viability
holistic	community
quality of life	sustainability of:
sense of ownership	agriculture
assets	recreation
showcase	planning group
results-based/measurable	

Based on the above, the following DRAFT vision statement was developed. The committee will finalize and adopt the vision statement at its next quarterly meeting.

**Don Williams Lake Watershed Improvement Project
Vision Statement (DRAFT)**

Establish the Don Williams Lake Watershed Project as an exemplary study in the holistic assimilation of people and processes sustaining ecological health, recreational enjoyment and Iowa's agricultural heritage for generations to come.

As a final discussion point of the meeting, Lois asked if people understand what a watershed is and if they do that in this case it extends beyond just the Lake?

The group agreed that is a key point to make sure that the education and public awareness program needs to address. It may be clear to the attendees but is probably is not to the general public.

Next Meeting:

The next quarterly meeting will be held in late April. Every effort needs to be made to invite property owners and the public.